

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL BOMBAY PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:EFIN, USINJC, IN, US

SUBJECT: GEORGE BALL'S PHARMACEUTICAL MISSION TO INDIA

REF: BOMBAY 248

1. DEPARTMENT CONVEYED SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL TO WIEN OF WYETH AND TAMBLIN OF PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION ON FEBRUARY 3. MCTAGGERT OF PFIZER OUT OF COUNTRY FOR NEXT TEN DAYS, AND COMPANY OFFICIALS ADVISED US TO PASS INFORMATION CONTAINED REFTEL TO WILLIAM TREHARNE, VICE PRESIDENT, PFIZER INTERNATIONAL. AS EMBASSY AWARE, TREHARNE PRESENTLY IN NEW DELHI AS MEMBER OF U.S. SIDE OF JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL.

2. TAMBLIN REPORTED THAT A NUMBER OF U.S. DRUG FIRM REPS IN INDIA HAD MADE RECOMMENDATIONS TO PARENT FIRMS CONSISTENT WITH VIEWS EXPRESSED BY PILLAI. AS FAR AS HE WAS AWARE, HOWEVER, TEN SPONSORING FIRMS ARE AS DETERMINED AS EVER THAT HIGH LEVEL GROUP SHOULD GO TO INDIA. HE REPORTED VISIT HAD BEEN PUT OFF UNTIL SECOND WEEK OF MARCH BECAUSE OF ILLNESS DELEGATION LEADER, GEORGE BALL. WHILE REMINDING DEPT-

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OFF ONCE AGAIN THAT MISSION WAS IN NO WAY CONNECTED TO PMA,

TAMBLIN AGREED INSURE THAT SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL WAS PASSED

ON TO MISSION SPONSORS.

3. WE LOCATED WIEN IN PHILADELPHIA. HE APPARENTLY DECIDED NOT TO GO TO DELHI AS SCHEDULED BECAUSE CHANGE IN VISIT DATES REQUIRED HIS PRESENCE IN U.S. HE CONFIRMED THAT BALL WAS ILL AND THAT TRIP POSTPONED ABOUT A MONTH. NEW DATES HAVE NOT YET BEEN SET. WIEN IS FIRM IN HIS CONVICTION THAT MISSION SHOULD GO TO INDIA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE POINTED TO STATEMENTS BY SETHI IN LOK SABHA JANUARY 6 AND 22 AS INDICATIVE OF NEW MINISTER'S ATTITUDE. SETHI REPORTEDLY STATED TAKEOVER OF MULTINATIONAL DRUG AND PHARMACEUTICAL FIRMS UNDER GOI CONSIDERATION, AND THAT AS INTERMEDIATE STEP FOREIGN EQUITY IN INDIAN DRUG FIRMS WILL BE REDUCED TO 30 PERCENT IMMEDIATELY AND 26 PERCENT LATER. SETHI REPORTEDLY CONFIRMED THIS WAS FIRM GOI DECISION AND THAT NO COMPROMISE WITH INDIVIDUAL COMPANIES WAS POSSIBLE. AS RESULT, WIEN BELIEVES ATTEMPTS TO REASON WITH SETHI WOULD BE FUTILE, AND THAT ONLY DIRECT APPROACH TO PRIME MINISTER OFFERS ANY HOPE REVERSAL OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE FIRM GOI DECISION.

4. IN SUM, THEREFORE, DELEGATION SPONSORS AS DETERMINED AS EVER TO MOVE AHEAD WITH VISIT, AND ONLY ILLNESS OF DELEGATION LEADER HAS RESULTED IN POSTPONEMENT. WE SHALL KEEP YOU ADVISED OF DEVELOPMENTS. INGERSOLL

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